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Item 4 (k) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions

Policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session, the present note was prepared to brief the Commission on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2005 that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. The note, furthermore, indicates the actions taken and proposed to be taken by the Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the brief contained herein.

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I. Follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2005/48, regarding the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, took note with appreciation of the contributions of the functional commissions, the regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to the preparation of the input of the Economic and Social Council to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly; welcomed the progress made in the review of the working methods of several functional commissions, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/270 B, in order better to pursue the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits; recognized that progress had been made in several areas to enhance cooperation among the functional commissions and between the functional commissions and the funds and programmes; and invited the functional commissions to continue to work towards further strengthening that cooperation, including through the exchange of experiences with the aim of contributing to the quality and impact of intergovernmental decisions.

Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

Methods of work

2. In preparation for its thirty-sixth meeting in 2005, and in compliance with the request of the Economic and Social Council, the Bureau of the Statistical Commission conducted a detailed review of the working methods of the Commission (E/CN.3/2005/2). The Commission took note of the suggestions made by the Bureau and implemented some procedures on a trial basis during the session; it agreed to further analyse the experiences and take them into account in the preparation for the thirty-seventh session (see also E/CN.3/2006/2).

3. It is an important feature of the methods of work of the Statistical Commission that its agenda includes a standing item on follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions and their possible implications for the work of the Commission. The notes prepared in support of that item, such as the present one, are an important means of sharing information between the Council and the Statistical Commission. Relevant decisions of other functional commissions are reported to the Statistical Commission under the various substantive items related to demographic statistics, environment statistics, social and gender statistics.

Development indicators

4. Ever since the Economic and Social Council invited the Statistical Commission to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (see Council resolutions 1999/55 and 2000/27), the Commission has been discussing the technical aspects of development indicators annually.

5. At its current session, the Commission is considering a report of the Secretary-General describing the results of the assessment by the Statistics Division of countries' capacity to produce the Millennium Development Goal indicators (E/CN.3/2006/14). Annex III of the report contains a brief update on the ongoing work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators. The Commission is also discussing this year a report prepared by the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goal indicators, which presents a critical analysis of the findings of the Secretary-General regarding countries' capacity to produce the Millennium Development Goal indicators (E/CN.3/2006/15).

II. Mainstreaming gender perspectives

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

6. In its resolution 2005/31, the Council, recalling its resolutions 2001/41 of 7 July 2001, 2002/23 of 24 July 2002, 2003/49 of 24 July 2003 and 2004/4 of 7 July 2004, called upon all entities of the United Nations system to intensify efforts to address the challenges to the integration of gender perspectives in policies and programmes, including by further developing and institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation tools and gender impact analysis methodologies, promoting the collection, compilation and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and ensuring the use by them of such data.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

7. Gender mainstreaming is reflected in the range of development indicators considered by the Commission in the context of follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and United Nations conferences and summits, which is covered under item 3 (k) of the provisional agenda of the current session. The Division is responsible for coordinating the preparation of statistics for the Millennium Development Goal indicators. The database on such indicators maintained by the Division contains data broken down by sex to the extent possible.

8. A further relevant statistical activity in this context is the publication at the end of 2005 by the Statistics Division of *Progress of the World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*. That publication highlights the availability of gender statistics and assesses progress made in this area over the last 30 years (see also E/CN.3/2006/12).

III. Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

9. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2005/44, recalled the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2004

on the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010". The Council called upon development partners, including organizations of the United Nations system, to provide assistance to national statistical bodies of the least developed countries in order to strengthen monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

10. A relevant statistical activity in this context, which will largely benefit least developed countries, is the Statistics Division's project on poverty measurement, which will result in a publication entitled *Handbook on Poverty Statistics: Concepts, Methods and Policy Use*, to be published in 2005 (see E/CN.3/2006/19). The project will assist policymakers and statisticians in Member countries to face the growing demand for poverty statistics and related information by building up a system of poverty measurement that is responsive to national and international data needs.

11. Moreover, the Statistics Division has launched a development account project for the period 2004-2006 in the Economic Community of West African States region to strengthen statistical capacity there. Several least developed countries are directly benefiting from that initiative. In addition, pending formal approval by the General Assembly, a project to strengthen statistical capacity in support of progress towards the internationally agreed development goals in the Southern African Development Community region is expected to start in January 2006.

IV. The 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

12. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2005/13, recalling its resolutions endorsing previous decennial World Population and Housing Census Programmes; having reviewed the efforts made by Member States to carry out censuses as part of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and also the activities of the United Nations and funding agencies in support of national efforts in that regard; considering the importance of the population and housing census to the preparation of a meaningful core set of national data and information necessary for socio-economic planning and governance; and recognizing the increasing importance of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses for meeting data needs for the implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, and to other regional and national meetings, supported the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme. The Council urged Member States to carry out a population and housing census at least once during the period from 2005 to 2014 and to disseminate census results as an essential source of information for small-area, national, regional and international planning and development and to provide census results to national stakeholders as well as the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental

organizations. The Council also emphasized the importance of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme for socio-economic planning, and requested increased support for the Programme. It furthermore requested the Secretary-General to implement the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

13. At its current session, the Commission is considering a report (E/CN.3/2006/16) of the Secretary-General summarizing activities completed in response to the requests made by the Commission regarding the role of the Statistics Division as a secretariat of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. The report also briefs the Commission on the work on the revision and update of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* and the coordination with regional activities in the preparation for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

V. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

14. At its fourth session, from 16 to 27 May 2005, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended that Governments, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations should, within the context of the 2005 Millennium Development Goals review and beyond, develop disaggregated data and information on indigenous peoples, in partnership with indigenous peoples.[1] It also recommended that the United Nations agencies involved in data-collection processes regarding the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 2 ("Achieve universal primary education") should develop indicators relevant for indigenous peoples that capture their specificities including languages, culture, values and world views.

Actions taken and proposed by the Commission and the Division

15. In its report on the fourth session, the Permanent Forum welcomed the collaboration with the Statistics Division in reviewing national practices in data collection and dissemination in the areas of ethnicity, language and religion. The Forum was also pleased to note that data on national and/or ethnic groups were being made available online by the Statistics Division at the following website: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybcens.htm.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 43* (E/2005/43).